

JIMMIE'S CREEK BRIDGE

HARRIS TEXAS

County's Creek Bridge

Texas Historic Bridge Recording Project

Spanning Indian Creek in Comanche City Park

(Moved from Indian Creek at Indian

Creek Road [County Route 165], Comanche Vicinity

Comanche County)

(Moved from Jimmie's Creek in unnamed road,

Sidney Vicinity, Comanche County)

Comanche

Comanche County

Texas

HARRIS  
TEX  
47-COM A,  
1-

## WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORY - AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORDS

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

1819 C St., NW

Washington, DC 20540

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

JIMMIE'S CREEK BRIDGE

(Jimmy's Creek Bridge)

HAER No. TX-54

HAER  
TEX  
47-COM  
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Location: Spanning Indian Creek in Comanche City Park, Comanche, Comanche County, Texas.  
(Moved from Indian Creek at Indian Creek Road [County Route 165], Comanche vicinity, Comanche County, Texas.)  
(Moved from Jimmie's Creek at unnamed road, Sidney vicinity, Comanche County, Texas.)  
UTM: 14/535780/3528480  
USGS: Comanche, Texas, quadrangle (1969).

Date of Construction: 1908.

Designer: Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company, Leavenworth, Kansas.

Builder: Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company, Leavenworth, Kansas.

Present Owner: City of Comanche.

Present Use: Pedestrian bridge.

Significance: This pin-connected Pratt through truss is a surviving example of a standard roadway bridge used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is one of two remaining Pratt through trusses in Comanche County, Texas.

Historian: Estella M. Chung, August 1996. Revised by Barbara Stocklin, September 1998.

Project Information: This document was prepared as a part of the Texas Historic Bridges Recording Project performed during the summer of 1996 by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). The project was sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

Jimmie's Creek Bridge was constructed as a Pratt through truss with inclined end posts, a truss which was "too familiar to the American bridge engineer to require explanation" in a 1900 *Engineering News* article.<sup>1</sup> The Pratt truss was a standard truss used in the early twentieth century. Its practicality and simplicity made it an economical choice for rural communities. The form was created by Thomas Pratt, probably around 1842; he and his father Caleb patented it in 1844.<sup>2</sup> Pratt trusses carry loads with diagonals in tension and verticals in compression, except for the verticals nearest inclined end posts.

The subject truss is approximately seventy-one feet long, divided into five panels, with a roadway width of 12'-0". The inclined end posts consist of two Carnegie channels riveted to a continuous top plate and tie plates underneath. The top chord and compression verticals are rectangular sections built up from two channels connected by riveted single lacing. Crossed rods form the upper and lower lateral bracing. The hip verticals and diagonals are paired rods with turnbuckles. Portal bracing consists of angles arranged in a double lattice. Angles are used again for the struts spanning between upper-chord panel points. The lower chord's double rectangular eye bars are connected to the verticals by a pin and secured with hexagonal nuts. 1-section deck beams are suspended from U-bolts wrapped around the lower-chord pins. The deck beams support wooden stringers and a floor of timber planking.

In its current location, the bridge rests upon modern concrete abutments. A modern chain link fence was installed along the truss as a safety barrier for pedestrians. A plaque riveted onto one of the inclined end posts reads, "BUILT BY TEXAS BRIDGE CO. DALLAS TEXAS 1906." However, this builder's plate was added to the structure in 1975 and does not actually pertain to this bridge.<sup>3</sup>

The bridge over Jimmie's Creek (also called Jimmy's Creek) was actually built in 1908 by Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company of Leavenworth, Kansas.<sup>4</sup> It was erected just southwest of Sidney, an agricultural community in west central Comanche County, on a route that connected Sidney with the communities of Blanket and Brownwood in adjacent Brown

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<sup>1</sup> "Developments of the Nineteenth Century in Bridge Design and Construction," *Engineering News* 44 (December 13, 1900): 409.

<sup>2</sup> Carl W. Condit, *American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> See note accompanying bridge inventory card in Comanche County bridge files (Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, Texas).

<sup>4</sup> For more about the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company, see Victor Darnell, *Directory of American Bridge-Building Companies 1840-1900*, Occasional Publication No. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Society for Industrial Archaeology, 1984), p. 17.

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County.<sup>5</sup> The Commissioner's Court of Comanche County awarded the \$678.95 contract on February 10, 1908. The county agreed to pay an additional \$40.00 for lumber and another \$31.05 to transport the lumber and necessary materials to the site.<sup>6</sup>

At that time, wagons were part of everyday life in Comanche County and the county's farmers had just begun to mechanize their operations with the gasoline engine. The agriculture-based county grew steadily. The automobile became popular in the 1920s and it was noted that "one of the county's most prosperous farmers brings his produce to town in a Chevrolet." Freight, poultry farming, peanut farming and milling, and cheese processing were introduced to the county between 1920 and 1970.<sup>7</sup>

Jimmie's Creek Bridge was at its original location for sixty-three years until it was moved by the county in 1971. The bridge had a short stay in a pasture until Claude Prater developed Indian Creek Subdivision just southwest of the city of Comanche in 1975. The bridge was then moved again to span Indian Creek at Indian Creek Drive. Non-residents used the bridge as a shortcut to highways leading west to Brownwood and south to Goldthwaite.<sup>8</sup> The bridge also served as an entrance to Comanche City Park. When the Texas Department of Transportation determined that the bridge needed to be replaced in the late 1980s, agency officials developed a plan to relocate the truss to nearby Comanche City Park to serve pedestrian traffic. In the spring of 1990, Texas Department of Transportation contractors relocated the truss span to the park. In its place is a modern concrete bridge.

Jimmie's Creek Bridge is one of approximately 100 bridges employing a Pratt through truss in Texas (one of approximately eighty-two that are pin-connected), and one of two Pratt through trusses remaining in Comanche County.

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<sup>5</sup> Walter Prescott Webb, ed., *The Handbook of Texas*, vol. 2 (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952).

<sup>6</sup> Comanche County, Texas, *Commissioners' Court Minutes*, vol. 6 (Comanche County Courthouse, Comanche, Texas), p. 59 (February 10, 1908).

<sup>7</sup> Heritage Division Committee, *Patchwork of Memories: Historical Sketches of Comanche County Texas* (Comanche, Texas: W. S. Caffey, 1976), pp. 12-13.

<sup>8</sup> Bill Flannery, City Secretary for the City of Comanche, personal conversation.

## SOURCES CONSULTED

- Comanche County Bridge Files. Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, Texas.
- Comanche County, Texas. *Commissioners' Court Minutes*. Comanche County Courthouse, Comanche, Texas.
- Condit, Carl W. *American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.
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- Plowden, David. *Bridges: The Spans of North America*. New York: Viking Press, 1974.
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APPENDIX: Sketch Plan and Elevation, Jimmie's Creek Bridge

